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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the historical and social contexts of schooling for 31 predominately African American Catholic high schools referred to here as the "Cornerstones." Twenty-six (86%) of these schools were in inner city areas. In an effort to understand the common characteristics and practices of these schools, their 31 principals in the 1996-97 school year were asked to complete the "African American Catholic High School Survey," a 75-item instrument designed to provide school-specific information on a wide range of topics, including the school building, students, the principal, curriculum and instruction, finances and development, Catholic identity, and African American cultural identity. Sites visits were conducted at 22 of the schools, where reflective conversations were held with the principals using data collection procedures that were developed and implemented nationally. These conversations and document reviews provided information about the schools and the beliefs and practices of the principals. A conspicuous characteristic of these schools is the academic success each enjoys, as measured by the number of students who go on to college (91% across the schools). Other educational practices that were common to these schools were: (1) open tracking system, with students grouped by ability but moving in and out of tracks; (2) summer remediation for incoming students who lack academic skills; (3) regard for the individual student; (4) required summer make-ups for students deficient in particular areas; (5) emphasis on guidance and counseling; (6) a climate centered on academics; and (7) a safe and orderly environment, with dismissal of students not willing to comply with school guidelines. Implications of these findings for the formation of a consortium of Catholic high schools are discussed. (Contains 7 tables, 1 figure, and 44 references.) (Author/SLD)

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CORNERSTONES: CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS THAT SERVE PREDOMINATELY AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT POPULATIONS

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CORNERSTONES: CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS THAT SERVE PREDOMINATELY AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT POPULATIONS

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Abstract

This paper describes the historical and social contexts of schooling for 31 predominantly African American Catholic high schools referred to here as the Cornerstones. In an effort to understand the commonplace characteristics and practices of the African American Catholic high schools, the 31 assigned principals for the 1996-1997 academic year were asked to complete the African American Catholic High School Survey, a 75-item instrument made-up of both multiple-choice and descriptive-like items designed to provide focused school-specific information on a wide range of topic areas including the school building, students; the principal, curriculum and instruction; finances and development; Catholic identity; and African American cultural identity. Additionally, I conducted site visits to 22 (71%) of the 31 identified schools, located in urban communities across the nation, to collect additional qualitative, perception-based data utilizing procedures that I have developed and implemented nationally with urban principals that involves reflective conversations (in-depth interviews) and document analysis.

I collected and analyzed additional qualitative data using a variety of means: One in-depth reflective conversation with 22 principals of approximately 60 minutes in duration; school building tours, the analysis of official and informal documents, school and classroom observations. The in-depth reflective conversations provided both factual information regarding the principals perceptions, beliefs, values; the school's historical and present operations; and also valuable perception-based data needed to develop realistic frames of the schooling context. There are 44 references.

CORNERSTONES[1]: CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS THAT SERVE PREDOMINATELY AFRICAN AMERICAN[2] STUDENT POPULATIONS[3]

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Introduction

An excerpt from When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor, the 1996 treatise on life in contemporary urban America by sociologist William Julius Wilson illustrates the stereotypical reactions of urban employers to urban job applicants:

> The employers who volunteered information on the schools they recruited from usually mentioned Catholic schools or those public schools from Chicago's largely white Northwest Side communities. Although employees recruited from the Catholic schools were more likely white, black students from Catholic schools were also viewed more favorably than those from public schools. For example, one employer at a suburban department store pointed out that although minority students fail the skills test more frequently than white students, "the minorities [Blacks] that go

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[1] The stone which the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all. This was done by the Lord; what a wonderful sight it is" (Psalm 118:22-23)

[2] In acknowledgment of past and present usage, the terms Colored, Negro (es), Black(s) and African American(s) are used interchangeably throughout the article to refer to individuals of African descent who in reside within the United States, its territories, and former colonies.

[3] The author gratefully acknowledges the financial support for this research provided by the Lilly Foundation to the Catholic University of America for the Study of the Future of Catholic Schools and the Catholic University of America's Office of Sponsored Research.

> to parochial schools test as well as the whites. They come here dressed as well, and this is a totally different act. Now this is the difference that I can spot, is between your parochial school and your public school. (p. 134)

What factors, present among inner-city Catholic schools, seem to minimize the significance of race among African American students, making them desirable to employers and institutions of higher education? An answer to this question is important for policy makers who grapple with issues of equity and economic opportunity in the inner-city and religious communities that financially support these schools.

A High School Consortium was established in 1995 under the direction of the National Black Catholic Congress as a result of earnest concerns for the future of Catholic high school education in predominantly African American communities. The Congress, housed in Baltimore, MD has identified some 31 schools in urban and otherwise marginalized communities of the country where the student populations of African Americans exceeds 75%. The overarching goal of the Consortium is to put in place national strategies and support systems that will insure the survival of these schools and their service to the African American community for the next millennium.

The 31 predominantly African American Catholic high schools or the "Cornerstones" as I affectionately refer to them in this paper are located in Baltimore; Birmingham; Brooklyn; Detroit; Chicago; Kansas City, Los Angeles and its nearby urban communities; Montgomery; Newark (NJ) and its nearby urban communities; New Orleans, St. Louis; Washington (DC) and nearby urban

communities. The histories of these schools are particularly interesting in that 32% (or 10) of the schools are "historically Black" in that they were founded for the express purpose of educating African American high school students. The remaining 21 schools evolved as predominately African American as of result of shifting racial demographic patterns that occurred over the past twenty years in urban America.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the historical and social contexts of these schools. Two overarching questions guided the research: 1. What are the commonplace characteristics and practices of Catholic high schools that serve predominately African American student populations? and 2. How might a national consortium of African American Catholic high schools best insure the viability of these schools for the next millennium?

Procedures

In an effort to understand the commonplace characteristics and practices of the African American Catholic high schools, the 31 assigned principals for the 1996-1997 academic year were asked to complete the African American Catholic High School Survey[1], a 75-item instrument made-up of both multiple-choice and descriptive-like items designed to provide focused school-specific information on a wide range of topic areas including the school building, students; the principal, curriculum and instruction; finances and development; Catholic identity; and African American cultural identity. Additionally, I conducted site visits to 22 (71%) of the 31 identified schools to collect additional qualitative data utilizing procedures that I have developed and implemented nationally with urban principals that involves reflective conversations (in-depth interviews) and document analysis (Polite, 1997).

I collected and analyzed qualitative data using a variety of means: One in-depth reflective conversation with 22 principals of approximately 60 minutes in duration; school building tours, the analysis of official and informal documents, school and classroom observations. The in-depth reflective conversation provided both factual information regarding the principals perceptions, beliefs, values; the school's historical and present operations; and also valuable perception-based data needed to develop realistic frames of the schooling context (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Historical Perspectives

Among the 35 million African Americans (US Bureau of the Census, (1992), 9.2% are Roman Catholics (Lachman & Kosmin, 1995). African Americans have affiliated with Catholicism and Catholic schools in the United States since the beginning of the colonial era. Records document that some of the earliest African-Caribbean settlers in the colonies professed Catholicism in the very early 1500s (Davis, 1990). One factor which enhanced this relationship during the 18th century was the Code Noir (1724-1803), which prescribed a more liberal treatment of free African Americans, mulattos, and slaves in the French and Spanish Catholic territory of Louisiana. As a result of the Louisiana Territory's laws, several African American girls were educated at Ursuline Academy in New Orleans in 1727 (McDermott & Hunt, 1991). Two thousand African Americans, freed under Code Noir, migrated to Louisiana following Santo Domingo's slave revolt in 1791 (Williams, 1983). They were generally characterized as wealthy, educated, French-speaking, and Roman Catholic.

The 169 year chronicle of formal Catholic schooling for African American students can be traced to the founding of St. Frances Academy for Colored Girls in Baltimore (MD) in 1828 (Polite, 1996). The permission to form the religious community known as the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the first community of African American nuns, was granted the following year (1829). The Oblates were formally recognized by Pope Gregory XVI in 1831 (Dedeaux, 1944). The two prominent co-founders, Elizabeth Lange (known later as Sr. Mary and Mother Lange) and Maria Magdalen Balas (known as Sr. Marie Frances), were freeborn Black refugees from the insurrection in San Domingo (the former French possession in the West Indies known as presently as the Isle of Hispaniola) who were trained teachers (Hadrick, 1964; Davis, 1990; Polite, 1996). The two co-founders were joined by Almaide Duchemin (Sr. Theresa) whose parents were murdered in San Domingo and another Caribbean refugee, Rosina Boegue (known as Sr. Mary Rose). Father Joubert, a French Sulpician priest, served as their spiritual director and shared the title of founder (Dedeaux, 1944). St. Frances is only one example. Catholic religious communities opened an impressive number of 76 schools for African American children during the Reconstruction Era following the Civil War from 1890 to 1917 (Benson, Yeager, Wood, Guerra, & Manno, 1986).

More recently, a survey conducted in 1990 by Lachman and Kosmin (1995) concluded that among a sample of 113,000 adults, African American Catholics were more likely than most Americans [across all racial categories] to complete high school and college. Only 18% of the African American Catholic respondents dropped out of high school, compared with 31% of the total African

American population and 21% of the general population. According to Benson et al. (1986), African American students in Catholic high schools reported feeling more confident and having less trouble thinking of things to say in a group than did students of all other racial groups in the study (students were asked to identify themselves as American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, or Other). Another study of African Americans in Catholic schools found that 82% of these students believed that they would complete college, compared to 74% of White students in the study sample (Benson et al, 1986). This evidence posits a significant correlation between Catholicism and educational attainment, especially given the research on the effectiveness of Catholic schools for the current large percentage of African American students enrolled in urban Catholic schools.

The success of these schools has made a tremendous impact on the lives of countless African Americans. In a special appeal, the Black bishops voiced this plea:

> The Catholic school has been and remains one of the chief vehicles of evangelization within the Black community. We cannot overemphasize the tremendous importance of parochial schools for the support of them and to insure their continuation on the touchstone of the Local Church's sincerity in the evangelization of the Black community[2] (African American Bishops of the United States, 1984, p. 28).

In its 1990 fall meeting, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement saying, among other things:

> Our Church and our nation have been enriched because of the quality of education provided in Catholic Schools over the last 300 years. Now we are called to sustain and expand this vitally important ministry of the Church[3] (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1990, p.28).

The remainder of this paper will showcase these schools, their students; their principals, curriculum and instruction; finances and development; Catholic identity; and African American cultural identity. The paper will conclude with a discussion of how might a national consortium of African American Catholic high schools best insure the viability of these for the next millennium?

The Cornerstone Schools

The cornerstones are found mainly in communities described as "inner-city/urban" (86% or 26 out 31 schools). An additional 12% (or 4 schools) are best described as near-central-city schools because they are located either within the first or second geographical ring surrounding an urban metropolis (Polite, 1993). Albeit the majority of the cornerstones are located in so-called 'economically challenged' communities, several others are found in rather established and stable urban environments.

The cornerstones have largely organized following the traditional US patterns of grade grouping for secondary school-age students with 80% (or 25) of the 31 schools offering grades 9-12. The remaining 6 schools are structured

more within the fashion of the private 'academy' with grades 7-12. The schools collectively enroll approximately 12,000 students with an average enrollment of 390 students per school. The largest school, Bishop Loughlin in Brooklyn enrolled 913 students during the 1996-1997 school year while the smallest school, the newly formed Loyola High School in Detroit, served 115 students during that same period. When compared with the previous academic year, 64% (20) of the principals reported that their student enrollment remained stable while another 20% (6) reported slight increases in enrollment over the previous year. Nearly 30% (or 9) of the 31 schools have enrollments of 300 or fewer than students. For purposes of this paper, the cornerstones are categorized into three categories: privately-owned, diocesan, and historically African American (see Tables 1, 2, and 3).

Table 1

Privately-Owned Cornerstones 1996-1997

	Name	City	Established	Enroll.	Tuition
1	Catherine McCurley	Brooklyn	1941	266	$3,400.00
2	Nazareth Regional	Brooklyn	1962	575	$4,500.00
3	St. Augustine[4]	New Orleans	1951	680	$2,750.00
4	St. Mary's Academy	New Orleans	1867	627	$1,400.00
5	Xavier University Preparatory	New Orleans	1915	515	$2,600.00
6	Loyola	Detroit	1993	115	$2,500.00
7	Holy Family	Birmingham	1943	190	$1,725.00
8	St. Jude	Montgomery	1934	156	$1,800.00
9	St. Frances	Baltimore	1828	240	$3,500.00
10	St. Benedict	Newark	1870	453	$4,300.00
11	Immaculate Conception	Montclair	1925	250	$4,600.00
12	Hales Franciscan	Chicago	1963	334	$3,100.00
13	Academy of Our Lady	Chicago	1874	174	$3,500.00
14	Rice	New York	1938	330	$3,330.00
15	St. Mary's Academy	Ingelwood	1889	456	$3,400.00
16	Bishop McNamara	Forrestville	1964	650	$4,600.00

[4] St. Augustine's (New Orleans) although listed among the privately-owned schools, actually enjoys a special arrangement with the diocese of New Orleans (the title holder) and the Josephite congregation that has operated the school since its inception.

Table 2

Diocesan-Owned Cornerstones 1996-1997

	Name	City	Established	Enroll.	Tuition
1	Bishop Loughlin	Brooklyn	1933	913	$3,840.00
2	Redeemer-Seton	New Orleans	1994	465	$2,585.00
3	Archbishop Carroll	Wash. DC	1951	710	$4,000.00
4	St. Martin de Porres	Detroit	1967	700	$3,160.00
5	Bishop Borgess	Detroit	1968	347	$3,200.00
6	East Catholic	Detroit	1969	175	$2,000.00
7	Benedictine	Detroit	1959	324	$3,200.00
8	Cardinal Ritter	St. Louis	1979	122	$2,800.00
9	Cardinal Gibbons	Baltimore	1962	228	$4,200.00
10	Bishop Hogan	Kansas City	1944	195	$2,700.00
11	Essex	East Orange	1957	395	$3,900.00
12	Leo	Chicago	1920	375	$3,000.00
13	Verbum Dei	Los Angeles	1962	255	$2,600.00
14	Junipero Serra	Gardena	1950	395	$3,160.00
15	Queen of Angels	Compton	1995	206	$2,200.00

Nearly half (48% or 15) of the cornerstones are described as diocesan schools while the remaining 52% (or 16) are privately owned. The 16 privately-owned schools enroll 6,011 students collectively with an average student population of 375 and an average tuition rate of $3,187.81. By close contrast, the diocesan-owned schools enroll 5,806 student with an average school enrollment of 405 and an average tuition rate of $3,103.00. The privately-owned schools, supported primarily by Catholic religious communities of nuns, priests, and/or religious were established in late 1800s and early 1900s. The diocesan-owned schools were formed in the second half of the 20th century, mainly in the 1950s and 1960s.

From the personal accounts of the principals, the continuing existence of each of the cornerstones represent a true mission to the African American community, however, the privately-owned schools, without exception, reflect special commitments to the African American community on the part of Catholic religious communities, many of which are grappling with a multiplicity of concurrent issues including aging membership, declining vocations, and diminished resources (Diamond, 1997; Galletto, 1995; McCarron, 1997). For example, St. Mary's Academy in New Orleans was established in 1867 by the Sisters of the Holy Family, another vowed group of African American nuns.

After completing site visits to 70% (or 22) of the 31 schools and analyzing the survey data received from the principals, it seems accurate to assess the physical conditions of the schools, collectively, described as "good" with 76% (23) needing minor repairs to the physical plant. Given, however, that the majority of the cornerstones are operating under extremely austere budgets, the additional

financial resources needed to redress minor repairs are oftentimes not available, resulting often in the need for "major repairs" at substantially greater cost.

Finally, special notice should be given to the third category of cornerstones, the historical cornerstones. The 10 historical cornerstones include both privately-owned and diocesan controlled schools (see Table 3) These schools, from their origin, were designed and structured as institutions with specific mission of evangelization and academic preparation to the African American community where they are housed. The oldest of these schools, St. Frances Academy of Baltimore, has been in existence for 167 years. St. Frances Academy [for Colored Girls] opened in Baltimore (MD) 19 years before Elizabeth Cady Stanton would organize the first American women's rights convention (Sellers, 1975) and more than 30 years prior to the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. The newest of these schools has not experienced its first graduating class, Loyola High Schools, formed in 1993. Each of these historical cornerstones has a special history and contribution, often in economically challenged communities. The cornerstones are historical artifacts of the African American Catholic experience in the United States. The principals provided numerous examples of the historical significance their schools. As a representative example of the impact that these historical schools have on the lives of their students and the greater community at large, Mrs. Geraldine Perry's, Principal of St. Jude High School in Montgomery, comments are particularly insightful:

St. Jude High School, established in 1934 has the distinction of being situated in the birthplace of the civil rights movement, is recognized by the African American community for its role in the civil rights marches of the 1960s, and sits along an historical civil rights route. We have the unique opportunity to host and be a part of newsworthy African American events in our city because of the rich heritage of the school and our student body. We proudly utilize our school facility as a showcase of African American art, poetry, the most prominent of which is a 7ft. bronze sculpture of Jesus that graces our foyer [sculptured by an African American artist].

Table 3

Historically African American Cornerstones

School	City	Founded	Ownership	Enroll	Tuition	Graduates	College Attend.
St. Frances Academy	Baltimore	1828	Private	240	$3,500	96 -100%	96-100%
St. Mary's Academy	New Orleans	1867	Private	627 *	$1,400	96 -100%	96-100%
Xavier Prep.	New Orleans	1915	Private	515	$2,600	96 -100%	96-100%
St. Jude	Montgomery	1934	Other	156	$1,800	96 -100%	96-100%
Holy Family	Birmingham	1943	Private	190	$1,725	96 -100%	91 -95%
St. Augustine	New Orleans	1951	Private	680	$2,700	95 -100%	96-100%
Hales Franciscan	Chicago	1963	Private	334	$3,100	96 -100%	96-100%
St. Martin de Porres	Detroit	1967	Diocesan	700	$3,100	96 -100%	91 -95%
Cardinal Ritter	St. Louis	1979	Diocesan	257	$2,800	96 -100%	96-100%
Loyola	Detroit	1993	Other	115	$2,500	NA	NA

* Represents an enrollment of grades 7-12.

The Cornerstone Students

In this section, I discuss those characteristics that define the 12,000 students who presently attend the 31 cornerstone schools. In face-to-face interviews with the 22 principals, it appears that the majority (54%) of the students attending these schools describe themselves as non-Catholic Christians with approximately 46% identifying as Roman Catholic.

The good news regarding the cornerstone schools remains the academic success that each continues to enjoy as measured by the number of students that go on to attend 4-year colleges upon graduation, at least 91% across the schools. Tables 4 and 5 demonstrate the percentage of cornerstone students that graduated and planned to attend college, respectively, during this 1996-1997 academic year. My efforts did not explore students' performance on standardized examinations, however, several principals remarked during their personal interviews that standardized testing is an area of concern. In fact, when I questioned several groups of students (15 focus groups, representing of students from 51% of the schools) across the country, the concern that surfaced was centered around college entrance scores (ACT and SAT) that were not as high as the students had expected, resulting in them having to make colleges choices among a second tier of colleges as opposed to the first tier colleges and Ivy League schools. Given the educational outcomes of their counterparts in local public schools, the concern become rather musing. Anthony S. Bryk (1993) found that Catholic schools appear to have an independent effect on achievement, especially in reducing disparities between disadvantaged and advantaged student. Bryk argues, and I concur based on my work with the

cornerstones, that success experienced by African American students in Catholic is realized as result of de-emphasizing tracking, creating small, caring learning community. The following are commonplace educational practices among the cornerstones:

1. Open tracking system, meaning the students are commonly grouped by ability, but there is open flexibility and movement in and out of tracks. In most cases, the number of students dictates the diversity of academic options. When limited, the cornerstone curriculum tends to focus on the more academic course. The cornerstones tend to track their students "high."
2. The majority (81%) of the cornerstone high schools require summer remediation programs for in-coming 9th graders who are deficient in the major academic areas.
3. Each student is valued as an individual and as a contributing member of the learning community. There are no anonymous students attending the cornerstone schools. Each school offers a full course of co-curricular activities, meaning given the average size of the schools (390), most students are involved in non-academic endeavors that provide additional opportunities to interact with caring adults.
4. Students who are unsuccessful in specific course areas during the academic year are generally "required" to make-up the deficiency during the summer.
5. Each cornerstone community places strong emphasis on guidance and counseling, preparing students for college or entry-level jobs in the workplace.
6. The climate at each school is centered on academics.

7. Students who are unwilling or unable to comply with school guidelines are not allowed to continue. This does not mean that all disruptive students are removed. The principals report that on average 5 students (or 01% of the students) are dismissed annually due to severe discipline infractions. The result is a safe and orderly environment that is conducive to learning.

Table 4

Percent of seniors graduated 1997 reported by school

Percent Range	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
81 - 90 %	0	0
91 - 95 %	5	16%
96 - 100 %	26	84%

Table 5

Percent of seniors that will attend college in the fall, 1997 reported by school

Percent Range	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
81 - 91	4	13%
91 - 95	14	45%
96 - 100%	13	42%

Principals reported that much of the success experienced at the cornerstone schools is attributed to the personal support that each student

receives, the caring teachers and staff; and explicit Christian values that influence many aspects of the schooling process.

Predominately African American Catholic schools are not utopian learning communities. The principals' surveys reveal emerging trends that implore further research and attention. These trends are related to the racial composition, levels of student poverty, special needs, abusive parents and households, and discipline problems

Trend One: The percentage of African American students attending the cornerstone schools is increasing and the students represent lower income families. As previously discussed, a special category of schools exists among the cornerstones, the 'Historically African American Cornerstones.' Each of the 10 schools (see Table 3) reports enrollments of African American students between 96 and 100%. In fact, in interviews with the principals of these schools, I was only able to identify 5 non-African American students out of the 3,814 students enrolled in schools classified as historically African American. The remaining 21 schools, those that evolved as African American due to shifting demographic trends in urban and suburban communities report on average 85% African American student enrollments. Two factors emerge as important. The first is that these non-historical schools, schools that are already beyond 75% African American, are reporting increasing overall numbers and percentages of African American students, meaning non-African American parents rarely consider predominately African American Catholics schools despite their proven ability to graduate extremely high percentages (96-100%) of students and send more than 91% of their graduates on to four year colleges.

The second factor is equally interesting from a sociology perspective. Nearly half (48%) (or 15 schools) the schools report that they are serving increasing numbers of students who are living in poverty. Indicating that the upper middle income African American parents are not likely to select predominately African American Catholic schools for their children.

Social scientists have given considerable attention to the escalated migration during the 1970s and 1980s of middle-income African Americans out of the inner cities to the near-central-city suburbs in search of greater economic opportunities and escape from the high crime rates and inferior public schools and services commonly associated with the core cities (Culver, 1982; Farley, 1983; Grier & Grier, 1983; Kain, 1985; Lake, 1981; Rose, 1976; Stahura, 1983, 1987; Winsberg, 1983). According to Galster (1991), the population of African Americans in the suburbs increased twice as fast during the 1970s as during the 1960s, and the growth of the African American population was significantly greater in the suburbs than in the inner cities. Although the more affluent African Americans increasingly chose to relocate to the suburbs during the 1970s, the prevailing characteristics of the typical African American suburbs have not changed radically since the 1940s. African Americans remain polarized in a relatively small number of suburbs, whose make-up purport limited opportunities for social and economic improvement (Rosenbaum, Popkin, Kaufman, & Rusin, 1991). With few exceptions, those suburbs which tend to be predominantly African American are characteristically found adjacent to or near to central cities (Schneider & Logan, 1985), and tend to be older areas whose residents generally have relatively low socioeconomic status, significantly higher income than those

African American families living in the inner city (Long & Sterns, 1981). Moreover, as Schneider and Logan have shown, predominantly African American suburbs tend over time to replicate the adverse social and economic conditions of their neighboring inner cities. The impact on the inner city is clear, particularly in the case of inner-city Catholic schools that are overwhelmingly African American, there are fewer middle and upper middle income families. Fr. David Pilato, principal of the Junipero Serra High School in the Los Angeles archdiocese provided an oral exhibit of this complex issue during my in-depth interview:

> A sociologist from Loyola-Marymount conducted a study to determined whether Serra should be closed. One interesting outcome of her [the sociologist] study was that African American parents have been avoiding certain schools in Los Angeles that have the reputation as being "all Black." In fact, it appears to be a mind set [the metropolitan Los Angeles area] that "west is best," And that is why there are a large numbers of African Americans attending Catholic schools in mainly all-White neighborhoods to the west of the city. The neighborhoods that these parents are sending their children are *totally White* [emphasis added]. Those schools to the west of us enjoy large enrollments with large numbers of African American students but the overall percentage of African American students is smaller than ours. Another opinion that many African American parents expressed was that the route to our school is more than the route to St. Bernard's...because those larger schools to the west are twice our size in population, they are able to offer a

> more comprehensive academic and extra-curricular programs.... After recruiting at area elementary schools, it is clear that many African American parents will not send their children to Serra because they prefer a more integrated setting. We are more than 70% African American and the issue of recruiting more Hispanics [to integrate] has come up in PTO meetings.

It appears that, with respect to the schools showcased in this article, once the cornerstone is identified as serving the marginalized and the lower middle income, few upper middle income parents chose these schools. The result in limited financial resources.

Trend Two: Increasing numbers of African American students matriculating in cornerstone schools are perceived by their principals as having"special needs." Sr. John Francis, principal of St. Frances Academy in Baltimore, reported that "whenever middle income parents come with their children, I know immediately that the child has either a discipline problem or special needs." More than half (61%) of the cornerstone principals indicated that they have received increasing numbers of students who are eligible for special educational program under federal guidelines. It remains no secret that the public sector has been overwhelmed by the numbers of students requiring special educational assistance. This problem has been magnified in recent years with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In fact, research reports that African Americans, particularly African American males have been ill served by special education programs in public schools (Harry & Anderson, 1994). It seems

entirely logically, as Sr. John Francis indicated, that frustrated parents of children requiring special education services might opt for a Catholic school where there are smaller classrooms and ostensibly more one-on-one interaction. One of the obvious concerns is the fact that teachers and administrators in predominately African American schools most often have not been trained in the skills and techniques of special education.

Trend Three: An increasing number of students affected by human immunodeficiency virus or HIV (the virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or AIDS. The fact that 8 principals (or 26%) reported that they had experienced increasing numbers of students "affected" by the AIDS virus is an indication of potential, emerging problem, a problem that perhaps Catholic principals are ill prepared to address. Given the social stigma attached to the HIV/AIDS problem, it is possible that many other principals may not be aware of this serious problem affecting their students. The term "affected," of course could mean a number of things: personally infected, affected by infected family members and friends.

The cornerstones principals report two less significant trends among their that merit some attention: 1. Nine schools (or 30%) reported increasing numbers of students who are habitual behavior problems; 2. The principals of 10 schools (or 32%) indicated that they are receiving increasing numbers of students who are living in abusive households. These two issues posit the potential for negative impact on the overall stability of the student population.

Cornerstone Principals

The individuals presently serving as principals at the 31 cornerstone schools, collectively, represent a well-educated group. Table 6 provides matrix display of the principals' highest level of education obtained. As indicated, 96% of principals have earned at least one master's degree. It is significant that 20% or 1 out 5 hold a master's degree in religious studies or divinity.

Table 6

Principals represented by Highest degree earned

Highest degree	Number	Percent
Bachelor's	1	03%
Master's	22	72%
Two Master's	06	19%
Doctorate	02	06%
Total	31	100%

I also examined additional demographic descriptors of race, gender, and status in life. There are 15 men (48%) and 16 women (51%). Obviously, the overwhelming majority are Roman Catholics, however, 2 principals identified themselves as 'non-Catholic.' There are presently 9 (29%) religious administering individual cornerstone schools. The remaining 22 (71%) are laypersons.

Finally, the data regarding the salaries was less defined due to the fact that 10 (32%) of principals failed to provide salary information. However, it is

clear from the information gleaned from those 21 principals who did provide personal income information that there are great disparities from school to school as well among religious and laypersons. The salary range for religious was between $18,000.00 and $60,000.00. By contrast, the salary range for the lay principals was between $35,000.00 and $80,000.00. Obviously, many factors contribute to the disparities including geographical location, cost of living, religious stipends, etc.

The Cornerstone Culture/Identity

One question often raised regarding the cornerstone schools is, "are they truly Catholic?" The question is particularly interesting given that from my best estimates, the majority (at least 56%) of the students who attend predominantly African American Catholic schools are not professed Roman Catholics. Two factors skewed my understanding of the exact number of African American Catholic students who attend predominantly African American Catholic high schools: 1. Several cornerstone schools no longer record or collect information on the religious affiliation of their students; 2. There is no uniform manner of categorizing students by religious affiliation across the schools (i.e. some schools have adopted very different ways of categorizing their students, for example some schools record the specific religious denomination for each student, other schools record by merely distancing the Catholics from non-Catholics; others record by Christian and non-Christian etc.) It is, however, clear that the majority of students are not Roman Catholics.

As I moved from one school to the next, city to city, I clearly noticed the presence of a 'commonplaceness' of culture and/or identity. This cornerstone culture/identity includes the following core components:

1. A code of behavior, dress, values, discipline, and language that is grounded within the Christian traditions of love of God and love of ones neighbor;
2. Catholic religious rituals practiced as an affirmation of the African American culture of the students;
3. A focus on ministry and evangelization [not conversion to Catholicism]; and
4. A strong commitment to a set of beliefs that evolved from the American Catholic traditions and the traditions and histories of African and African Americans, especially the teachings of prominent African and African American Catholics.

Catholic culture/identity, however, is best demonstrated in predominantly African American Catholic schools by their emphasis on 'ministry' with preference for the poor and marginalized of the African American community. The cornerstone school spreads the Word to those young persons who have not yet developed mature notions about the purpose of life. The education empowers them with Catholic morals and values needed to enhance the quality of their everyday lives. Catholic identity, then, is best measured by the extent to which the school prepares young men and women to live moral and decent lives and participate in the evangelizing mission of the Church. This ministry to the African American community was repeatedly mentioned by principals of the various cornerstones. For example, Mr. Thomas Calhoun, principal, Hales Franciscan High School in Chicago spoke typically about the ministry of Catholic schooling:

> Catholic schools are an extension of the larger [Roman Catholic] Church. They are an important organ of the ministry of the Church, specifically to the African American community...*There is no separation!* [emphasis added]...We share in the overall ministry of the Church. Our position(s) are not just simply 'jobs'. We attempt to hire people who have a *deeper sense of commitment* [emphasis added] specifically to minister to the African American community. *Hear [clearly] what I am saying!* [emphasis added]... I have worked with wonderful, committed teachers in public schools, but I am talking about Catholic school teachers who have a clear commitment to Catholic *ministry* [emphasis added] to African American youth....Our parents sense the difference [between Catholic schooling and public schooling] also...In the midst of this *madness* [emphasis added] that we call the Southside [Chicago], *there is hope* [emphasis added] for an education that stresses values, morals, as well as academics

Mr. Alverez A. Peychaud, Jr., principal of the Xavier University Preparatory School in New Orleans echoed a similar conviction:

> Our mission in Catholic schools is to minister *with Christ* [emphasis added]! We are all co-ministers with Christ. We, at Xavier Prep, frequently use this phrase [minister with Christ]. We minister and we spread the *Word* [emphasis added]. We teach to the Word and we teach by example...We are not perfect, but we do have a moral 'ideal' that everyone understands and works towards. We tell

> teachers, at the point that they are hired, that we [the Catholic school] can not pay them fully [appropriately] for the job that they are expected to do. Our teachers accept their positions as a ministry. We expect that they [teachers] will participate in the evangelization process by the model that they provide to our students.

The history of Catholic schooling in the United States can be traced to 1829, when the First Provincial Council in Baltimore recognized the need for Catholic schools and defined their [Catholic schools] purpose to be teaching the principles of faith and morals to the young (McCarron, 1997). During the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore 1884, the bishops agreed that the establishment of an extensive parochial school system in the United Stated was an absolute necessity due to the Protestant controlled public schools The bishops mandated, in 1884, that parents, mainly the immigrant poor, send their children to Catholic schools. The weight of the bishops' mandate resulted in the rapid growth and proliferation of Catholic schools throughout the United States (Buetow, 1985; Murdick, 1989, McCarron, 1997).

The African American Catholic community has historically played an influential role in the Catholic education of African Americans also. In fact, the First Colored Catholic Congress elucidated the purpose and distinction of Catholic schools for African American youths in its 1889 general statement to its assembly:

> The education of a people being the great and fundamental means of elevating it to the higher planes to which all Christian

> civilization tends, we pledge ourselves to aid in establishing, wherever we are to be found, Catholic Schools, embracing the primary and higher branches of knowledge, as in them and through them alone can we expect to reach the large masses of colored children now growing up in this country without a semblance of Christian education (cited in Three Catholic Afro-American Congresses, 1978, p. 68.)

As recently as 1984, The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) in their School Board Study Programs identified the following Catholic identity components of the Catholic school:

1. The school's philosophy reflects its Catholic character.
2. The school communicates to its students the gospel message.
3. The school teaches and models faith community.
4. The school is a place that fosters the formation of conscience.
5. The school teaches its students the importance of service.
6. The school is a prayerful place.
7. The school has dear expectations for discipline.
8. The school teaches students to appreciate their Catholic culture.
9. The school raises career choices in vocational terms.
10. The school recognizes the role of parents as the primary educators of their children.
11. The school is an extension of the teaching of the bishop. (p.20-21).

Archbishop James Lyke, the first African American archbishop, addressed to the National Congress on Catholic Education and included this comment regarding Catholic schools for African American students:

> The Catholic school in the African American community enhances the vitality of the [Catholic] Church, for the Church is not a closed social system, but rather an open global Church that is more "colorful" with each passing year. The school continues to reach out into the environment and draws in all people without respect to race, culture, or financial status. This is the will of God and the mission of God's people. The Second Vatican Council, the popes of the second half of the 20th century, and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops have consistently reminded the Church of its true mission in their pastoral letters: *The Church in the Modern World, The Declaration on Christian Education, A Call to Action* of Pope Paul VI, To *Teach as Jesus Did,* and Pope John Paul II's *Address to Catholic School Leaders and to the Black Catholic Leadership,* in May of 1987.

In my observations at the various schools, I paid special attention for evidence of Catholic culture and found that there were numerous examples of the Catholic tradition among these schools. I observed a lesson on the sacrament of baptism at Loyola High School in Detroit; a Holy Week Prayer Service at Hales Franciscan High School (Chicago); there were gospel choirs in rehearsal at Archbishop Carroll (Washington, DC) and Verbum Dei (Los Angeles). I even noticed a religion class in prayer before the altar of the Holy Martyrs of Uganda at

St., Augustine's High School (New Orleans). I witnessed a lesson on Black saints and the popes of African heritage. The principals report the average number of school-wide masses celebrated per year is 7 with an average of 5 non-Eucharistic lituguries per academic year. Among the 31 schools investigated, 100% (or 31) offer a retreat program for students and 84% offer a retreat program teachers and staff

African American Cultural Identity

Curriculum theorist, Peter Oliva (1992) defined an affective curriculum as one that provides learning opportunities that have positive influences on students' appreciation, attitudes, beliefs, and values. In this current regard, I found that an appreciation of African American students' race, ethnicity, and culture to be particularly important for the cornerstone learning communities. I discovered in my reflective conversations with the cornerstone principals that each of them expressed a genuine concern for a "cultural learning agenda" geared specifically towards African American students. The cornerstone principals might best be described as 'ethno-humanist,' a concept developed by Kofi Lomotey. Lomotey (1992) differentiates between the bureaucrat- principal and the ethno-humanist principal:

> The bureaucrat/administrator role identity facilitates what Shujaa (1992) refers to as "schooling." It's objectives is meeting societal goals. The principals are merely committed to facilitating the movement of their students from grade to grade. In so doing, they perpetuate the stratification and credentialling functions of school.

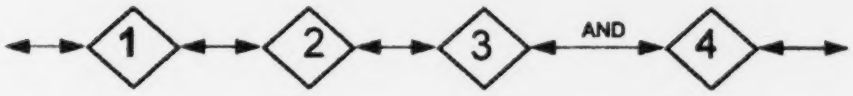
> The ethno-humanist role identity is more appropriately associated with Shujaa (1992) notion of "education." It's objective is meeting a set of cultural goals. In this role the principals identify with African American students as members of their culture. They argue that academic success is not enough. What is needed, these principal contend, is an education about one's culture, about life, and about where these African American students fit in the society and in the world. (p. 205)

More than African American principals expressing an affinity with African American students, I found that the White principals shared similar notions regarding the role of schooling in preparing African American student for society. Foster refers to this type of affective development as education for competence in community and culture (1992).

The cornerstone schools can be grouped into four categories with respect to their expression of African American culture and history (for an example of a multicultural curriculum reform that stresses four specific levels of multiculturalism, see Banks, 1988. Figure 1 depicts a continuum of African American culture that reflects a combination of how the principals described the cultural experiences of their schools, as well as, the information that I gleaned personally from analysis of documents collected from the various cornerstones and school observations. The continuum is a useful model for illustrating African American cultural expressions as currently practiced at the cornerstones, nationally. In reality, however, the schools do not fall so nicely into one of four

categories, but rather appear at various points along the continuum with fluid movement, both to the right and to the left (demonstrated by the arrows) depending upon the quality and quantity of resources and personnel available to them. The special care that the principals afford to cultural identity is probably best expressed in the detailed written comments of concerns provided

Figure 1. African American Cultural Continuum



29% (or 9) 55% (or 17) 16% (or 5) 0%

1 = Education to teach basic knowledge and appreciation of African American culture and history/herstory.

2 = Education to teach competence and mastery of African American culture and history/herstory.

3 = Education to place African American culture and history at the center of the cognitive and affective development of all students

AND

4 = Education to prepare social change agents for the betterment of the African American people.

by the principals that serve as an indication of how serious the question of cultural identity was considered.

Category 1 schools are those schools that teach basic knowledge and appreciation of African American culture and history. Only 29% of the cornerstones fall into this category. Cultural experience is seen as a separate entity, distinct from the academic domain and experienced most commonly as

"add-on" celebrations, special events i.e. Black History Month, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebrations, etc. As an example of a Category 1 school, one principal wrote:

> We have several yearly programs-religious and historical - we call it "Celebrate Us". On career day, we attempt to invite mostly African Americans. We will add an African American studies course to the curriculum for 1997-1998. We urge all teachers to add African American emphasis to all courses, but it is not a definite plan in place.

By contrast, the Category 2 schools have moved to insure competency and mastery of African American culture and history. The majority (55%) of the 31 cornerstones are category 2 schools, demonstrating efforts to incorporate African American culture into more than merely extracurricular activities, but through some specific curriculum modification. Bro. James Bonilla, FSC, principal of one the cornerstone schools in Brooklyn described his school as category 2 and added this statement as evidence of his school's cultural experience:

> It is very difficult for us to determine where we are with African American cultural experience at Bishop Louglin Memorial High school. Our students are 85% African American, but that cultural expression is further subdivided into many cultural experiences (American-born, southern-born, Native-born Africans,

> Haitians, all Caribbean island, Guyana and Belize, the eastern coast of Central America and Panama.) The emphasis on African American culture is most seen in the academic areas of history, English and religion...in the extracurricular activities, in our assemblies, in our art. We must follow closely the guidelines set up by the New York State. Nevertheless, within those strict guidelines, the contributions of African Americans are well-reflected in our textbooks. I have discussed this matter with key staff who concur with this statement [and we are confident] the African American presence, identity and pride are not tacked on to a static program and we are moving closer to centering our academic program around the African American culture.

Category 3 schools represent those schools that have undergone extensive curriculum modifications designed to place the African American culture and history at the very center of the academic curriculum. This Afrocentric curriculum is rare among the cornerstone schools with only 16% (or 5) of the schools falling into category 3. One principal described her category 3 school as follows:

> Within the last five years, our school has completely restructured the academic program. Instead of the previous modular schedule, we now use an integrated curriculum with teams of teachers working in block schedules...We feel that our curriculum

now is centered on the needs, interests, and history of our African American students.

Finally, Figure 1 indicates a fourth category that appears somewhat distanced from categories 1, 2, and 3. Albeit, there are no schools that currently fall in this category, but for Catholic schools serving predominantly African American students, the category represents an ideal of education to promote social change or relief to social problems affecting the African American community. The late Archbishop James P. Lyke, the first African American archbishop, expressed his vision of urban Catholic schools as agents of change when he addressed the National Congress on Catholic Education (1991):

> Inferior educational opportunity is one of the most deplorable outcomes of historical racism and discrimination in this country. This systemic injustice must be firmly addressed - not with platitudes, but with a commitment to search and find practical programs of action. A Catholic school in blight-stricken community is more than a mere 'bright spot.' It prepares its student by providing the tools needed to attack social injustice intellectually, economically, and spiritually.
>
> As Catholics, we are not to be afraid to be out of step with the rest of the world. It is not our calling to conform to those trends in society that bolster social injustice. We must collaborate in revamping the social order that allows our people to be caught in

webs of poverty, inadequate educational programs, slum housing and unemployment.

Education for social change within the inner-city Catholic high school might include the use of the "dialog method" of teaching (for examples of this approach see Shor & Freire, 1987; Ternasky, 1995). The late Paulo Freire popularized this approach to teaching that posits that schooling, especially for the marginalized, must focus on social, political, and economic inequalities in larger society through dialogs within the context of the classroom. The goal is to prepare student adults with the knowledge true social justice and the skills needed to transform the African American community economically, politically, socially, and spiritually.

The idea of teaching African American culture is indeed an important one for Catholic schools that serve largely African American students. There are no guidebooks that provide step-by-step procedures, but clearly the matter has not gone undressed in these cornerstone schools and is seen as an essential part of the wholistic education of African American students.

Finances and Development

It is rather difficult to make general statements regarding the finances and approaches to development associated with the cornerstone schools. Each school is unique! Albeit, each school is different with varying resources, one way to think of finances is to look at two model budgets, one for a private school and a second for a diocesan school. I considered these two schools to be typical of the cornerstone schools in enrollment, tuition, and student-teacher ratio.

Hales Franciscan High School was chosen to represent the private school (see Table 7). Hales Franciscan was founded 1962 by the Franciscans of the Sacred Heart Province and the Archdiocese of Chicago. It is the only historically Black, Catholic, all male college preparatory high school in the state of Illinois. The school is accredited by the North Central Association and the Illinois State Board of Education. Hales is owned and operated by a Lay Board of Trustees. The school's motto is In Virum Perfectum (Unto Perfect Manhood). The enrolled 334 students during the 1996-97 year with student-teacher ratio of 16 to 1. Tuition revenues represents less than half total income. Interestingly, Hales raises more revenue through special fund-raising than through tuition. Each student at Hales is eligible for a $3,250.00 grant per year.

Table 7

The 1995-1996 operating budget for Hales Franciscan High School, a privately-owned institution

Income	Percent	Dollar
Tuition revenue	44%	$ 968,000.00
Special fund-raising	46%	$1,012,000.00
Individuals gifts	10%	$ 220,000.00
Total operating budget	100%	$2,100,000.00

By contrast, Junipero High School is a diocesan high. The school was founded in 1950 by James Francis Cardinal McIntyre and the Marianist Order. The school is a coeducational, 4-year, Catholic college preparatory school in the

Los Angeles Catholic Archdiocese. Serra is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Western Catholic Educational Association, the College Board, and California Scholastic Federation. Serra depended largely upon the revenue raised from tuition (77%) as indicated by Table 8 below.

Table 8

The 1996-1997 operating budget for Junipero Serra High School, a diocesan controlled institution

Income	Percent	Dollar
Tuition	77%	$1,357,539.00
Diocesan subsidy	6%	$ 105,782.28
Private grants	6%	$ 105,782.28
Special Fund-raising		$ 35,260.76
Total operating budget		$1,604,364.32

Cornerstone principals are delighted by the academic success of their students. There appears to be, however, a ceaseless concern for the financial stability of all the schools. In the case of some cornerstone schools, an increase or decrease of 10 students could make the difference between remaining open or closing. The private schools rely upon financial support from religious communities that are experiencing financial difficulties. The diocesan schools are most often depending upon tuition, special-raising efforts, and support from the diocese. In the case of Serra above, the diocese provided $105,000 of support, but that diocesan support amounts to only 6% of the total budget.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The histories of African Americans and the American Catholicism, particularly Catholic schooling, have been entangled from the earliest Colonial Era. Beginning with the establishment of St. Francis Academy for Colored Girls in Baltimore (1828), the 169 year history of Catholic schooling, specifically for the African American, as emerged as a prominent factor in the education. History may never fully disclose the true effect of Catholic schooling on the African Americans and the country at large. For those who might wish to explore comprehensive works on this topic, I would recommend Fr. Cyprian Davis' (1990). The history of Black Catholics in the United States. and Professors Jacqueline Jordan Irvine and Michele Y. Foster's Irvine's (Eds.) (1996) Growing Up African American in Catholic Schools as two excellent resources.

The opportunities for the nation's inner-city children to acquire a quality education seems to become more disputable with each passing academic year. From all indications, the problems of public education are not only multifarious, but they more negatively impact African American and other disadvantaged minority students. A Catholic school, such as the cornerstone schools showcased in this paper, in plight-stricken communities, is more than a mere bright spot, it prepares its students by providing them with the tools needed to attack social injustices intellectually, economically, and spiritually. While public schools are crying out for value education, social action programs, local school-based management, community-building among staff and students, parental involvement, and volunteer support--these aspects are commonplace realities in most predominately African American Catholic schools. Given their success in

moving their graduates into four-year college, their safe and orderly environments; their focus on basic academics, and high expectations for all students, the Cornerstones are national examples of what the late Ronald Edmonds (1979) referred to as "effective schools."

> While recognizing the importance of family background in developing a child's character, personality, and intelligence, I cannot overemphasize my rejection of the notion that a school is relieved of its instructional obligations when teaching the children of the poor. I reject such a notion partly because I recognize the existence of schools that successfully teach basic skills to all children. Such success occurs partly because these schools are determined to serve all of their pupils without regard to family background. At the same time these schools recognize the necessity of modifying curricular design, text selection, teaching strategy, and so on, in response to differences in family background among pupils in the school. (p. 21)

African American students and parents must realize that Catholic schools are more than havens for students who would otherwise attend less desirable neighborhood schools. They are institutions in which well-defined values and morals are taught explicitly through the curriculum and implicitly through the daily routines and co-curricular activities. An essential part of the mission of the cornerstones is evangelization and the teaching of Christian traditions and values. Such a mission compels the leadership of the urban Catholic schools, where the majority of the students are African Americans, to consider the history

and traditions of this people when planning religious instruction and services. It is crucial that African American students be afforded the opportunity to practice the traditions of the Catholic Church without compromising their cultural heritage.

As the United States becomes more ethnically and racially diversified, urban Catholic schools increasingly are reflecting the multifaceted dimensions of our nation. The onus, however, is on all Americans to contribute in whatever manner possible to improve the education of this population. Catholic schools contribute significantly by providing both Christian values and a quality education for many African American students. African American Catholics and others who benefit from Catholic schooling in urban communities must plan *now* if these schools are to be preserved. The principal and leadership of St. Martin de Porres in Chicago announced that the school would be closed at the close of this year due to many problems including low enrollment and financial issues. The answers seem to lie in heightened political organization, new and creative strategies for raising funds, the development of specialty schools, and regional consolidation. It is in the best interest of concerned African American parents whose children attend Catholic schools to actively participate at the local level in strategic planning meetings and become actively involved in the efforts to generate funds to maintain their children's schools.

The High School Consortium might consider the following recommendations as topics for future research and discussion:

1. Consult national experts on the notion of Catholic identity as it relates to the African American Catholic school.

2. A five year follow-up study of the graduates of these schools might provide invaluable important regarding the effectiveness of the Catholic high school on their graduates.
3. Provide each school with local information regarding changes and projected changes in racial and social class demographics and social gentrification for the purposes of regional and city planning.
4. Consult Catholic experts on the areas of HIV and AIDS prevention (see National Catholic Education Association (1992); Pickeral, 1988; & Campbell, 1993.)
5. Consider a national discussion on the issue of special education and Catholic schooling.
6. Consider compiling national and local lists of prominent African American graduates of Catholic schools. Such persons can serve as intellectual and financial resources.
7. Create a national discussion around the importance and utility of standardized testing for African American students who attend Catholic schooling.
8. Present indicators suggest that the cornerstones schools are attracting larger percentages of African American students, students who represent lower middle income and working poor parents. Many of the cornerstones, especially the historical cornerstones, are presently 100% African American. Consider what strategies might be put in place to attract more middle income and upper income families.
9. Consider a national discussion and sharing of information on the practice of African American Catholic religious rituals and practices.

10. Where possible consider governmental support, for example training and services in special education.
11. Finally, The data gleaned from my observations and reflective conversations with the cornerstone principals suggest that they engage, routinely, in a number of activities across the following domains: 1) students' cognitive development, 2) administration, management and development, 3) students' affective/cultural development, 4) students' moral development (through spiritual and religious rituals and practices), and 5) self development and mentoring of other adults. Depending upon their individual training and social development, various principals excel in one or two of the domains, but none excel in across all the domains listed above. I noticed that some principals were excellent fund-raisers, others appeared to be curriculum and instruction specialists, and others seemed to focus on the African American spiritual experience. The National Black Catholic Congress might consider organizing professional development activities that focus on these central domains and perhaps even led by exemplary principals

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[1] Sections of the survey were adopted with permission from the Catholic Elementary School Survey developed by J. M. O'Keefe, Boston College

[2] What we have seen and heard, the Black Bishops of the United States, St. Anthony Messenger Press, September 9, 1984, page 28.

[3] "Support for Catholic Schools" statement of NCCB, Origins, November 29, 1990, v 20 no. 25.